United Nations CEDAW/C/MDV/CO/4-5

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

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Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

Concluding observations on the combined fourth and fifth periodic reports of Maldives*

1. The Committee considered the combined fourth and fifth periodic reports of Maldives (CEDAW/C/MDV/4-5) at its 1293rd and 1294th meetings, on 27 February 2015 (see CEDAW/C/SR.1293 and 1294). The Committee's list of issues and questions is contained in CEDAW/C/MDV/Q/4-5 and the responses of Maldives are contained in CEDAW/C/MDV/Q/4-5/Add.1.

A. Introduction

2. The Committee appreciates that the State party submitted its combined fourth and fifth periodic reports. It also appreciates the State party's written replies to the list of issues and questions raised by the pre-sessional working group and welcomes the constructive dialogue that took place between the delegation and the Committee and the further clarifications provided in response to the questions posed orally by the Committee during the dialogue.

3. The Committee commends the State party on its high-level delegation, which was headed by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Dunya Maumoon, and included the Minister of State for Law and Gender, Hala Hameed, in addition to representatives of the ministries of education, health, and law and gender and the Permanent Mission of Maldives to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva.

B. Positive aspects

4. The Committee welcomes the progress achieved since its consideration in 2007 of the State party's combined second and third periodic reports (CEDAW/C/MDV/2-3) in undertaking legislative reforms, in particular the adoption of the following:

* Adopted by the Committee at its sixtieth session (16 February-6 March 2015).

Please recycle

(a) Penal Code, which includes a definition of rape and will enter into force in April 2015;

(b) Sexual Harassment and Abuse Prevention Act, in 2014;

(c) Sexual Offences Act, in 2014;

(d) Prevention of Human Trafficking Act, in 2013;

(e) Domestic Violence Prevention Act, in 2012;

(f) Employment Act, in 2008;

(g) Constitution, in 2008, which removes provisions barring women from being elected President or Vice-President.

5. The Committee welcomes the State party's efforts to improve its institutional and policy framework aimed at accelerating the elimination of discrimination against women and promoting gender equality, in particular the establishment of the Family Protection Authority in 2012 and the adoption of the Domestic Violence Prevention National Strategy (2014-2016).

6. The Committee welcomes the fact that, since its consideration of the previous reports, the State party ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2010.

C. Principal areas of concern and recommendations

Parliament (People's Majlis)

7. **The Committee stresses the crucial role of the legislative power in ensuring the full implementation of the Convention (see the statement by the Committee on its relationship with parliamentarians, adopted at the forty-fifth session, in 2010). It invites the People's Majlis, in line with its mandate, to take the necessary steps regarding the implementation of the present concluding observations between now and the next reporting period under the Convention.**

Reservation

8. The Committee welcomes the information provided by the delegation during the dialogue about the State party's commitment to partially withdrawing its reservation to article 16 (2), as mentioned in its response to the recommendations of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review (A/HRC/16/7/Add.1). It also notes as a positive development the elaboration of a Cabinet discussion paper on the State party's withdrawal of its reservations to article 16 (1) (a), (b), (e), (g) and (h).

9. **The Committee urges the State party to ensure the full implementation of the Convention and, to that end, recommends that it honour its commitment to withdrawing its reservation to article 16 (2) within a clear time frame and to reviewing its reservation to article 16 (1), with a view to fully withdrawing it, taking into consideration the practices of countries with similar religious backgrounds and legal systems that have successfully harmonized their national legislation with international human rights obligations and consultations with civil society, in particular women's organizations.**

Legislative framework and definition of discrimination against women

10. The Committee is concerned that, its ratification by the State party in 1993 notwithstanding, the Convention has yet to be incorporated into the State party's national legal system and therefore cannot be applied by the courts. While noting the State party's initiatives to conduct legal reform and to bring its national legislation into line with the Convention, in particular the gender equality bill, the Committee is concerned that the principle of non-discrimination on the basis of sex contained in the new Constitution is not in line with article 1 of the Convention and that the principle of equality between women and men is not yet explicitly enshrined in legislation. It also expresses concern about the delay in conducting a gender impact analysis of some of its existing laws, including family law provisions that continue to indirectly discriminate against women, and in adopting the regulations necessary for the full implementation of the Domestic Violence Prevention Act and the Prevention of Human Trafficking Act.

11. **The Committee calls upon the State party:**

(a) **To take steps to ensure the incorporation of the Convention into the State party's national legal system in order to make its provisions directly applicable and enforceable by the courts;**

(b) **To expeditiously adopt the gender equality bill and ensure that it includes a definition of discrimination, in conformity with article 1 of the Convention, encompassing both direct and indirect discrimination in the public and private spheres, as well as the principle of gender equality, in line with article 2 of the Convention;**

(c) **To conduct a systematic gender review of its legislation as part of the ongoing legal reform with a view to bringing it into full compliance with the Convention and ensuring that all discriminatory provisions, including family and criminal law provisions, are repealed or amended;**

(d) **To enact the regulations required for the full implementation of the Domestic Violence Prevention Act (2012) and the Prevention of Human Trafficking Act (2013).**

Access to justice

12. The Committee welcomes the various legislative initiatives aimed at improving the State party's administration of justice, such as the bills on legal aid, evidence, witness protection, juvenile justice and the judicature. The Committee remains deeply concerned about persistent barriers faced by women in gaining access to justice, which deter them from resorting to legal remedies and foster their lack of confidence in the judiciary. The Committee notes with particular concern:

(a) The insufficient independence of the judiciary, bias and gender stereotypes among judges and law enforcement officials, the absence of gender-sensitive procedures and the limited capacity of the police to deal with complaints from women about violations of their rights in a gender-sensitive manner;

(b) The existing discriminatory provisions regarding the participation of women as witnesses and delays in amending the stringent evidentiary provisions required for sexual violence offences;

(c) The lack of information on women's rights under the Convention and the existing legal framework targeted at women, thereby limiting their capacity to claim such rights, especially in relation to divorce and in cases of violence.

13. **The Committee urges the State party:**

(a) **To expedite the adoption of bills pending before the parliament aimed at strengthening the State party's administration of justice, in particular the bills on legal aid, evidence, witness protection, juvenile justice and the judicature, remove evidentiary requirements that discriminate against women and ensure the equal consideration and weight of women's testimonies as witnesses;**

(b) **To strengthen the independence of the judiciary, establish legal remedies that are expeditious and accessible to women, and ensure, through adequate regulations and procedures, that women who report violations, especially in cases of violence, are treated in a gender-sensitive manner at all stages of judicial proceedings;**

(c) **To take measures to increase the representation of women in the judiciary, in particular as judges and court officials;**

(d) **To provide systematic training to judges, prosecutors, law enforcement officers, especially the police, and lawyers on women's rights and ensure that the Convention, the Committee's general recommendations and its jurisprudence under the Optional Protocol are sufficiently known and applied by the judiciary and that they are an integral part of all capacity-building programmes;**

(e) **To enhance women's awareness of their rights and disseminate information on the remedies available to those who claim violations of their rights.**

National machinery for the advancement of women

14. The Committee welcomes the pledge made by the Government in November 2013 concerning the economic empowerment of women and zero tolerance of violence against women, the gender equality policy outlined in the State party's Strategic Action Plan (2013-2016), and the recent appointment of gender focal points in all ministries and departments. The Committee regrets, however, that the changes in the status and structure of the national machinery during the reporting period have weakened its institutional capacity to develop coherent and sustainable plans and policies and ensure effective gender mainstreaming across relevant sectors, which has a negative impact on the effective implementation of the Convention. The Committee is also concerned about the insufficient financial, human and technical resources allocated to the newly restructured Ministry of Law and Gender to effectively carry out its mandate and about the lack of information on the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the gender equality policy.

15. **The Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Strengthen the status and structure of the newly restructured Ministry of Law and Gender and provide it with adequate decision-making powers to enable it to develop sustainable policies and programmes aimed at achieving gender equality in a comprehensive manner and to effectively coordinate gender mainstreaming at all levels;**

(b) **Allocate sufficient and sustainable human and financial resources to the national machinery for its effective functioning in all areas of women's empowerment and to enable it to provide systematic training to staff and officials of other ministries and ensure that the Convention and the Committee's general recommendations are sufficiently known;**

(c) **Establish impact assessment mechanisms for the gender equality policy to ensure that it is adequately monitored and evaluated, with a view to informing further policies.**

National human rights institution

16. Given the mandate of the Human Rights Commission of Maldives to monitor women's rights and receive complaints, the Committee expresses deep concern at the legal proceedings brought by the Supreme Court against the Commission following a submission that it made during the State party's universal periodic review, and considers that such actions seriously undermine the independence of the Commission.

17. **The Committee calls upon the State party to ensure that the Human Rights Commission is able to discharge, with full independence and without any reprisals, its broad human rights mandate as sanctioned by the Constitution, including its mandate to work on women's rights, in accordance with the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (the Paris Principles).**

Temporary special measures

18. The Committee is concerned that legislative initiatives submitted to the parliament on the introduction of quotas for parliamentary and council elections have repeatedly been rejected. It also notes with concern the absence of temporary special measures as a systematic component to accelerate substantive equality between women and men in all areas of the Convention, the ongoing legal reform notwithstanding.

19. **The Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Intensify its efforts to raise the awareness of political parties regarding the nature and scope of temporary special measures with a view to familiarizing them with the concept;**

(b) **Include a legislative basis for the adoption of temporary special measures in the gender equality bill and implement those measures in various forms, such as outreach and support programmes, quotas and other proactive and results-oriented measures aimed at achieving substantive equality between women and men in all areas, especially in economic, political and public life, in which women are underrepresented, and use those measures to address the disadvantages and inequalities faced by women outside Male and in remote islands, migrant women, women with disabilities and women heads of household.**

Stereotypes and harmful practices

20. While noting the State party's efforts to combat gender stereotypes through the education system and the media, the Committee expresses its concern about the persistence of deeply entrenched traditional stereotypes regarding the roles and

responsibilities of women and men in the family and in society, which overemphasize the role of women as wives, mothers and caregivers, as well as prevent them from asserting their rights and actively participating in decision-making and other aspects of political and public life. The Committee particularly regrets the insufficient measures taken to address the prevalence of stereotypical perceptions among women themselves of their own role in society. It is also concerned at the growing trend of conservative interpretations of religion encouraging stereotypical patterns, which have a negative impact on women and girls, as acknowledged by the State party during the dialogue. The Committee is further concerned about the emergence of cases of female genital mutilation in the State party, the legislative prohibitions notwithstanding.

21. **The Committee recommends that the State party strengthen its efforts to combat discriminatory stereotypes and promote the value of substantive equality of women and men in society as a whole and, to that end:**

(a) **Adopt strategies, including awareness-raising and educational campaigns for the general public, targeting in particular girls and women, parents and teachers, as well as conduct dialogues, forums and consultations with religious leaders aimed at the promotion of non-stereotypical and positive images of women and establish a baseline and clear indicators to measure the progress and results of such strategies;**

(b) **Ensure the full implementation of the laws criminalizing female genital mutilation and bring perpetrators to justice.**

Violence against women

22. While noting the State party's efforts to strengthen its criminal law provisions against violence against women, the Committee notes with concern:

(a) That marital rape is not explicitly criminalized in the Sexual Offences Act and that article 14 of Act No. 12/2009, which sets out the special provisions that deal with child sex abuse offenders, allows exemptions in case of sexual offences committed against married girls by their husbands;

(b) The lack of enforcement of the Domestic Violence Prevention Act, adopted in 2012, in the light of the low number of reported cases of domestic violence;

(c) The inadequate framework for the protection of victims of violence, in particular the underresourced and ineffective family and protection services centres and safe houses;

(d) Social stigma attached to women who bring cases of sexual and domestic violence to court and the widespread perception among law enforcement officials that domestic violence cases are private family matters, which deter victims from reporting.

23. **The Committee urges the State party:**

(a) **To adopt specific legislation, within a clear time frame, to criminalize marital rape without any exemptions;**

(b) **To ensure the effective implementation of the Domestic Violence Prevention Act, including by allocating adequate financial resources for the implementation of the Domestic Violence Prevention National Strategy, and establish mechanisms to ensure that law enforcement officers respond to and**

investigate complaints regarding violence against women and that perpetrators are prosecuted and punished;

(c) To put in place an effective system to monitor and evaluate the implementation, effectiveness and impact of the new legislative framework and collect disaggregated data on the number of prosecutions and convictions of perpetrators;

(d) To strengthen victim assistance and rehabilitation by establishing a comprehensive care system for women who are victims of violence, including medical and psychological support, counselling and rehabilitation services, throughout the territory of the State party and, to that end, increase the effectiveness of the family and protection services centres and safe houses by providing adequate funding and trained personnel;

(e) To disseminate clear information aimed at specific groups, including teenage girls and migrant women, on the criminalization of various forms of violence under the new legislative framework;

(f) To develop measures to encourage women to lodge criminal complaints, and to eliminate the stereotyping and stigmatization faced by women who are victims of violence and claim their rights.

Trafficking and exploitation of prostitution

24. The Committee welcomes the anti-trafficking legislation enacted in 2013 and the establishment of a government oversight committee. While noting the forthcoming adoption of the National Action Plan against Human Trafficking and of national guidelines for the identification of and provision of assistance to victims, the Committee is concerned about delays in establishing shelters for victims of trafficking and the absence of procedures for early victim identification, case management and victim protection. It also reiterates its concerns about emerging forms of internal trafficking (see CEDAW/C/MDV/CO/3, para. 21) and the risk of internal trafficking for women and girls from remote islands who are placed in households in Male to gain access to higher education opportunities.

25. **The Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) Strengthen the implementation of the Prevention of Human Trafficking Act, including by enhancing capacity-building efforts for law enforcement and border patrol officers in order to increase their ability to identify potential victims of trafficking;

(b) Allocate adequate human, financial and technical resources to the Government Oversight Committee, as well as for the implementation of the National Action Plan against Human Trafficking;

(c) Establish appropriate protocols aimed at the early identification and referral of, and assistance to and support for, victims of trafficking, especially migrant and rural women, and develop mechanisms for the investigation, prosecution and punishment of trafficking offenders;

(d) Systematically collect information on trafficking in women and girls to, from and within the State party in order to take informed measures to tackle the phenomenon, and conduct research on the internal trafficking risk

factors to which women and girls from rural and remote islands travelling to Male or other islands for educational or employment opportunities are exposed and take measures to reduce such risks;

(e) **Consider ratifying the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime.**

26. The Committee notes with concern the criminalization of women engaged in prostitution in the State party, in particular the conviction of and sentences imposed on women in prostitution. Furthermore, the Committee regrets the lack of information and data on women in prostitution, on existing risk factors linked to the growing tourism industry in the State party, and on exit programmes and rehabilitation services for women in prostitution, in particular with regard to women and girls involved in the drug trade and migrant women who are reportedly trafficked for the purpose of sexual or economic exploitation and face deportation when apprehended by the police.

27. **The Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Consider reviewing relevant provisions in force to decriminalize women engaged in prostitution;**

(b) **Collect statistical and disaggregated data on the extent and magnitude of prostitution and undertake a study to assess the root causes of the phenomenon, giving particular attention to risk factors linked to the tourism sector, migration and the drug trade;**

(c) **Develop measures aimed at preventing the exploitation of prostitution of women and girls, in particular migrant women and those involved in the drug trade, and establish rehabilitation programmes for women and girls in prostitution, including shelters, exit programmes for women who wish to leave prostitution and alternative income-generating opportunities.**

Participation in political and public life

28. The Committee notes as a positive development the high representation of women in political parties and the existence of active women's wings in several political parties. It remains concerned, however, at the social and cultural barriers that continue to stigmatize women wishing to participate in political and public life and prevent them from running for public office. It is also concerned about the underrepresentation of women in the parliament, in government positions and in the judiciary, as well as at the decision-making level in the civil service. Furthermore, it regrets the limited participation of women in local governance at the community level, in particular on atolls, islands and city councils.

29. **The Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Conduct awareness-raising activities for politicians and community leaders, in particular men, as well as the general public, on the importance of the full and equal participation of women in leadership and decision-making with a view to eliminating social and patriarchal attitudes;**

(b) **Increase the role and visibility of women in politics with a view to translating their engagement into leadership roles, targeting in particular**

current and potential women candidates, and provide incentives for political parties to nominate equal numbers of women and men as candidates;

(c) **Adopt programmes to provide financial resources, technical advice on campaign management, targeted capacity-building and mentoring on leadership and negotiating skills for women who aim to gain access to public positions;**

(d) **Adopt and implement temporary special measures in the form of quotas, with benchmarks and specific timetables, to increase the representation of women in, among others, decision-making positions, the parliament, government positions, the judiciary and all local governance bodies at the atoll and island levels.**

Nationality

30. The Committee is concerned that the State party's nationality laws establish different conditions for women and men as regards the transmission of nationality depending, notably, on religion and marital status, which may have a disparate impact on children born out of wedlock to foreign mothers.

31. **The Committee recommends that the State party revise its nationality laws in order to remove discrimination against foreign women who have children with Maldivian men out of wedlock with regard to the transmission of nationality.**

Education

32. While noting the progress achieved in increasing enrolment and completion rates of girls at the primary level, the Committee expresses concern about girls' limited access to higher levels of education, as well as vocational and technical training, due to stereotypes and geographical constraints. The Committee is also concerned about de facto restrictions on the re-entry of pregnant adolescent girls and married girls under 18 years of age in the formal educational system. Furthermore, the Committee notes with concern that women and girls are concentrated in traditional fields of study.

33. **The Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Provide free school transport and economic assistance for girls, especially in rural areas and on remote islands, and promote their access to higher levels of education, as well as reduce the number of girls who are dropping out of school for such reasons as engagement in domestic work or early marriage and/or pregnancies;**

(b) **Formulate re-entry and inclusive education policies enabling pregnant girls, young mothers and married girls under 18 years of age to remain in or return to school and ensure that such policies are disseminated to all educational establishments, as well as among parents and communities;**

(c) **Encourage women and girls to choose non-traditional fields of education and careers, in particular technological and science subjects, such as environmental and engineering studies, which are particularly relevant in the State party.**

Employment

34. The Committee welcomes the establishment of the Employment Tribunal in 2008 and the adoption of comprehensive legislation providing for equal remuneration of women and men for work of equal value and for maternity protection. The Committee, however, notes with concern the high percentage of women who are self-employed or employed in the informal sector, where they lack legal protection and social security; the high unemployment rate among women; and the gender pay gap in both the public and private sectors. The Committee also notes with concern the exploitative working conditions of migrant women employed as domestic workers. While noting the creation of economic opportunities for women in the tourism sector, the Committee remains concerned about limited mobility options and cultural resistance from families and communities preventing the employment of women in the growing tourism sector.

35. **The Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Take measures to enhance awareness among women employees, including migrant women, about the provisions of the Employment Act, in particular on sexual harassment, and about remedies available to protect their rights;**

(b) **Provide sex-disaggregated data on the position of women in the labour market and reduce the gender pay gap, including by addressing occupational sex segregation and enforcing the principle of equal pay for work of equal value;**

(c) **Design and implement public policies to extend social protection coverage to women in the informal economy and self-employed women;**

(d) **Address obstacles preventing women from entering the labour market by implementing measures to promote the reconciliation of family and work responsibilities of women and men;**

(e) **Regulate and monitor the working conditions of migrant women employed as domestic workers in order to protect them from exploitative labour, through increased inspections and the imposition of fines on abusive employers;**

(f) **Promote opportunities for women to seek employment in the tourism sector.**

Health

36. The Committee notes the progress achieved in reducing maternal and child mortality and the maternal and child health bill currently before the parliament. It also welcomes the adoption of the National Strategic Plan on HIV and AIDS (2014-2018) and the National Reproductive Health Strategy (2014-2018), the establishment of a national health insurance system in 2011 and the introduction of a revised gender-sensitive curriculum that encompasses elements of sexual and reproductive health and rights. The Committee is concerned, however, about:

(a) Limited access to obstetric health services, including prenatal and postnatal services, for women living in remote areas;

(b) Restricted access, in practice, to sexual and reproductive health services for unmarried women and girls, despite the National Family Planning Guidelines providing for the right to receive services irrespective of marital status;

(c) Absence of a study and data on the prevalence of unsafe and illegal abortions, which is reportedly increasing.

37. **The Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Take steps to expedite the adoption of the maternal and child health bill;**

(b) **Increase access to obstetric health services for women, including prenatal and postnatal services, on all atolls and islands of the State party, in particular for rural women, by ensuring effective access to universal health insurance and by increasing the number of skilled health-care personnel;**

(c) **Ensure age-appropriate education on sexual and reproductive health and rights, including information about available contraceptive methods and family planning, in order to reduce the number of unwanted pregnancies and early pregnancies and remove restrictions applied in practice by health-care personnel to unmarried girls;**

(d) **Collect data and conduct research on the prevalence of unsafe and illegal abortions, disaggregated by age and geographical location.**

Economic and social benefits

38. The Committee notes the improvement of the social protection framework through the adoption of the Pensions Act in 2009 and the Social Protection Act in 2014. The Committee remains concerned, however, about women's limited access to established social schemes, as reflected by the gender disparity in pension subscriptions and housing schemes.

39. **The Committee invites the State party to develop positive measures to ensure that women equally benefit from all social schemes in place in the State party, and, in particular, increase the participation of women, including self-employed women, in the retirement pension scheme.**

Rural women

40. The Committee notes as a positive development the granting of legal status to Island Women's Development Committees in the Decentralization Act of 2010. It regrets, however, their limited autonomy and mandate, their inadequate voting procedures and their membership, which is restricted to women. It also regrets that they are largely ineffective, as acknowledged by the State party, owing to the lack of infrastructure and financial resources. In addition, the Committee is concerned about the limited participation of rural women in the use, management and governance of natural resources at the community level, as well as the insufficient measures taken to promote their economic empowerment.

41. **The Committee calls upon the State party:**

(a) **To increase the authority, mandate and capacity of the Island Women's Development Committees and provide them with adequate resources, including the reinstatement of allowances for their members, to enable them to become operational and effectively discharge their mandate in advising island**

councils on the integration of a gender perspective in all development plans and policies at the island level, and establish coordinating mechanisms between the Committees and the island councils;

(b) **To ensure that rural women participate in decision-making processes affecting the management of natural resources at the community level, including through the Island Women's Development Committees;**

(c) **To adopt long-term policies to increase rural women's access to income-generating opportunities, including through credit and loans, and to develop their entrepreneurial skills, especially in agriculture and in the fishing industry.**

Climate change and natural disasters

42. In the light of the State party's vulnerability to climate change and the challenges that it faces in disaster risk reduction, the Committee expresses concern about the limited participation of women in decision-making and policymaking regarding disaster management, post-disaster reconstruction and recovery programmes, as well as insufficient consultation to ensure that the views and concerns of women, in particular rural women, are adequately taken into account.

43. **The Committee calls upon the State party to ensure that women are represented and participate in decision-making and policymaking regarding plans and policies aimed at disaster management and in response to the impact of climate change. The Committee recommends that the State party promote gender equality as an explicit component of such plans and policies and ensure that women, in particular rural women, are consulted in their development.**

Marriage and family relations

44. The Committee welcomes forthcoming amendments to the Family Act to regulate the distribution of matrimonial assets upon divorce. The Committee notes with grave concern that consensual sexual relations outside marriage are still punished with flogging sentences, a situation that disproportionately affects women and girls and deters them from reporting sexual offences. The Committee also regrets the existence of legal exceptions to the minimum age of marriage of 18 years, upon the discretionary power of the Registrar of Marriages, as well as the high number of unregistered marriages in rural and remote areas, including child marriages, which have a negative impact on the educational and employment opportunities of girls. Furthermore, the Committee is concerned about the permissibility of polygamy, the presence of financial safeguards for female spouses notwithstanding, and its negative consequences on women's economic rights upon divorce, in the light of the high divorce rate in the State party.

45. **The Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **As a matter of urgency, decriminalize and abolish the imposition of flogging as a sentence for consensual sexual relations outside marriage, as recommended by the Committee in its previous concluding observations (CEDAW/C/MDV/CO/3, para. 34);**

(b) **Ensure that, in exceptional cases of marriage of persons under 18 years of age, the age limit is set at 16 years and court authorization is required in all such cases, in accordance with joint general recommendation No. 31 of the Committee**

on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women/general comment No. 18 of the Committee on the Rights of the Child on harmful practices;

(c) Take steps to facilitate the procedure to register marriages in rural and remote areas and enforce the mandatory registration of all marriages, including through sanctions;

(d) Take measures to discourage polygamy with a view to prohibiting it, in accordance with joint general recommendation No. 31 of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women/general comment No. 18 of the Committee on the Rights of the Child on harmful practices;

(e) Expedite the adoption of the proposed amendments to the Family Act and include guarantees to equal distribution of marital property upon divorce, in line with article 16 (1) of the Convention and the Committee's general recommendation No. 29 on the economic consequences of marriage, family relations and their dissolution.

Data collection and analysis

46. The Committee is concerned at the lack of sex-disaggregated data in a number of areas covered by the Convention, which are necessary for targeted policymaking. It is also concerned about the absence of indicators and clear time frames in the existing plans of action and their lack of monitoring.

47. **The Committee calls upon the State party to give priority to the systematic collection of comprehensive sex-disaggregated data and measurable indicators to assess trends in the situation of women and the progress made in achieving substantive equality, and draws its attention to the Committee's general recommendation No. 9 on statistical data concerning the situation of women.**

Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action

48. **The Committee calls upon the State party to use the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in its efforts to implement the provisions of the Convention.**

Millennium Development Goals and the post-2015 development framework

49. **The Committee calls for the integration of a gender perspective, in accordance with the provisions of the Convention, into all efforts aimed at the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and into the post-2015 development framework.**

Dissemination

50. **The Committee recalls the obligation of the State party to systematically and continuously implement the provisions of the Convention. It urges the State party to give priority attention to the implementation of the present concluding observations and recommendations between now and the submission of the next periodic report. The Committee therefore requests that the present concluding observations be disseminated in a timely manner, in the official language of the State party, to the relevant State institutions at all levels (national, regional and local), in particular to the Government, the ministries,**

the People's Majlis and the judiciary, to enable their full implementation. It encourages the State party to collaborate with all stakeholders concerned, such as employers' associations, trade unions, human rights and women's organizations, universities, research institutions and the media. It recommends that the present concluding observations be disseminated in an appropriate form at the local community level to enable their implementation. In addition, the Committee requests the State party to continue to disseminate the Convention, the Optional Protocol thereto and relevant jurisprudence, in addition to the Committee's general recommendations, to all stakeholders.

Technical assistance

51. **The Committee recommends that the State party link the implementation of the Convention to its development efforts and that it avail itself of regional or international technical assistance in this respect.**

Ratification of other treaties

52. **The Committee notes that the adherence of the State party to the nine major international human rights instruments[1] would enhance the enjoyment by women of their human rights and fundamental freedoms in all aspects of life. The Committee therefore encourages the State party to expedite the ratification of the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families and to ratify the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, which it has signed but not yet ratified.**

Follow-up to the concluding observations

53. **The Committee requests the State party to provide, within two years, written information on the steps taken to implement the recommendations contained in paragraphs 9, 13 (a)-(c) and 45 (a) above.**

Preparation of the next report

54. **The Committee invites the State party to submit its sixth periodic report in March 2019.**

55. **The Committee requests the State party to follow the harmonized guidelines on reporting under the international human rights treaties, including guidelines on a common core document and treaty-specific documents (HRI/GEN/2/Rev.6, chap. I).**

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[1] The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination; the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women; the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment; the Convention on the Rights of the Child; the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families; the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance; and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.